

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions of claims in the application.

1. (Currently amended): A method for producing a birefringent film, comprising the step of stretching a polymer film,

wherein, in the step of stretching the polymer film, the polymer film is stretched in a width direction while being shrunk in a longitudinal direction, and

~~assuming that~~ based on the lengths in the width direction and the longitudinal direction of the polymer film before being stretched ~~are~~ 1, a change ratio (STD) of the length in the width direction of the polymer film resulting from the stretching and a change ratio (SMD) of the length in the longitudinal direction of the polymer film resulting from the shrinking satisfy a relationship represented by the following formula (1).

$$(1/\text{STD})^{1/2} \leq \text{SMD} < 1 \quad \dots (1)$$

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently amended): The method according to claim 1 [[or 2]], wherein the SMD is less than 0.99.

4. (Currently amended): The method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, wherein the  $(1/\text{STD})^{1/2}$  is less than 0.99.

5. (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein when the STD is 1.2, the SMD is in a range from 0.9 to 0.92.

6. (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein when the STD is 1.3, the SMD is in a range from 0.86 to 0.90.

7. (Currently amended): The method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, wherein, after the polymer film is formed on a base directly, the polymer film is subjected to the stretching treatment and the shrinking treatment at the same time.

8. (Currently amended): The method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 7, wherein the base is subjected to the stretching treatment and the shrinking treatment at the same time, thereby stretching and shrinking the polymer film on the base.

9. (Currently amended): A birefringent film produced by the method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 8~~ claim 1.

10. (Original): An optical film comprising the birefringent film according to claim 9.

11. (Original): The optical film according to claim 10, further comprising a polarizer.

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12. (Original): The optical film according to claim 11, further comprising a transparent protective film, the transparent protective film being disposed on at least one surface of the polarizer.

13. (Currently amended): A liquid crystal panel comprising the optical film of according to ~~any one of claims 10 to 12~~ claim 10, the optical film being disposed on at least one surface of a liquid crystal cell.

14. (Original): A liquid crystal display comprising the liquid crystal panel according to claim 13.

15. (Currently amended): An image display comprising the optical film according to ~~any one of claims 10 to 12~~ claim 10.